



Martock and District Woodturners

Christmas Newsletter



December 2024



News

So we come to end of another busy year which has seen lots going on and several new faces in the club.

Those of you who were at the December club meeting will have picked up their programme for next year and seen what a sterling job Dave P has done in organising it (if you haven't seen it yet you can look at the [website](#) – just remember to select 2025 and press the Go button). Dave will be standing down as programme organiser in the new year, so we will need a replacement if we are to have any events in 2026. Please consider whether you could take on this role (with support from Dave and others of course) to help keep the club going for another year.

Once more a big thank you to everyone who has helped with the running of the club and its events over the past year. See you all in 2025!

Diary Dates

There is no hands-on in January

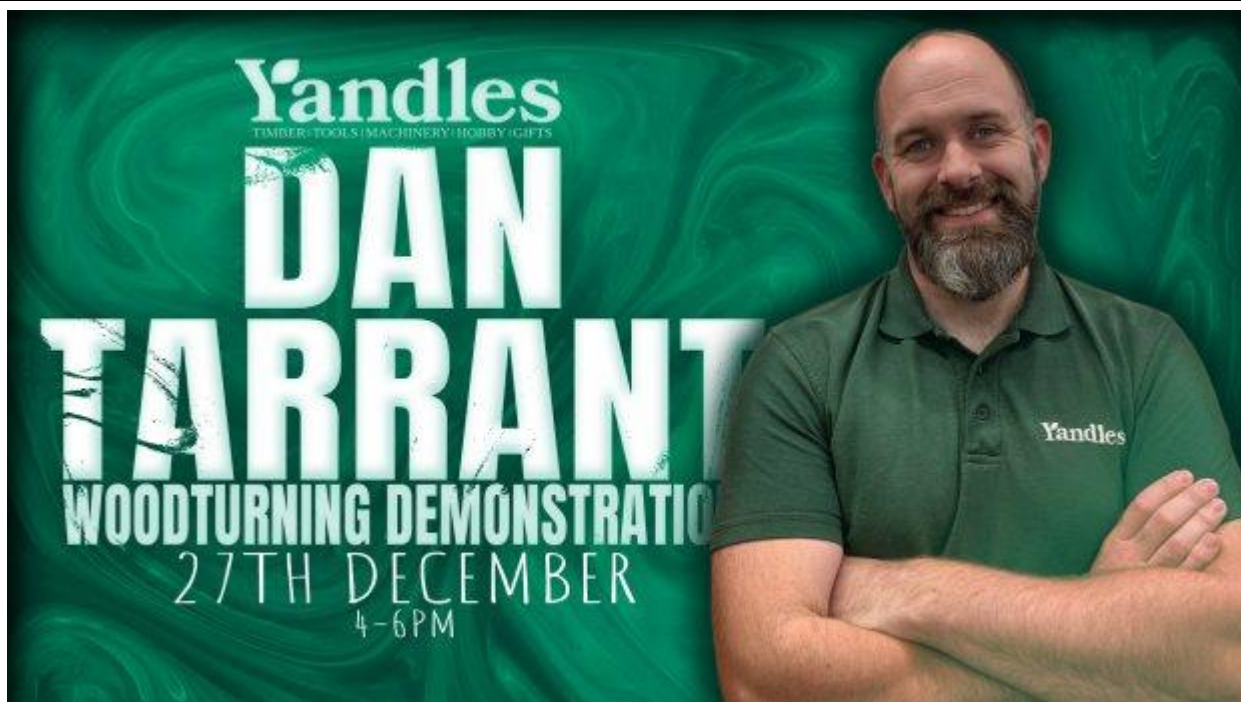
Tues, Jan 28th **Annual General Meeting** – Ash Pavilion

Sat, Feb 8th Hands-on session Starts 10am at Yandles training room

Tues, Feb 25th Club night at Ash Pavilion – Liz and Charlie

Sat, Mar 8th Hands-on session Starts 10am at Yandles training room

Tues, Mar 25th Club night at Ash Pavilion – Colwin Way



Club Meeting – November – Paul Sweet



Back in April Paul Sweet came to the club and turned a resin and burr bowl – something that he makes and sells a lot of. This time he was invited back to go through the process of preparing resin blanks suitable for turning.

Paul did confess to being unsure whether he had enough material on this subject, but managed to fill the evening and answered a lot of questions.

Plastic kitchen bowls make ideal moulds as the resin doesn't stick so it can be removed without destroying the mould. Look for the PP 5 recycling symbol indicating polypropylene, which can also be found on various plastic tubs. As soon as the resin is really hard and set properly it shrinks very slightly and pulls itself away from the mould without the need for a releasing agent (Paul generally allows 4 or 5 days).



Paul buys his resin from Moulddd.co.uk; the casting resin (shown here) is suitable for shallow moulds such as table mats and coasters. For bowls you need to use the [deep pour resin](#), which takes a lot longer to cure but will have a lot fewer bubbles.



Silicone moulds are also very good for resin. You can buy these from Moulddd or from eBay or Amazon, but the cheapest ones can be bought direct from China through sites like [Temu](#) or [AliExpress](#). These rectangular trays are ideal for table mats.



There are other ways to make moulds – this one is a plain beech bowl, which would be turned away to reveal the resin. As you can see, the resin has seeped through the end grain; resin will escape through the tiniest hole, so it is worth standing your moulds in a container when pouring (it is also a good idea to have a stand-by mould, so if you do have a leak the resin can be used in that rather than go to waste).



All Paul's bowls have burr at the bottom and resin on top; this gives something for the resin to hold on to. If you have bowl saver you can core it out to get another bowl, or you can use a smaller plastic bowl to make a void in the middle. The wood must be glued down before you add the resin, otherwise it will float; hot-melt glue works well for this.



Paul went through the process of preparing a mould for a vase.

- The timber is rough turned to cylinder and fixed to a base board using hot melt glue.
- The timber is wrapped in a thick plastic film to form the mould (in Paul's case an old dust extractor bag). Hot melt glue is used to attach the film to the blank and to stick the edge of the film together.
- Additional pieces of timber may be glued in place to fill any large voids.
- More hot melt glue is used to seal around the base and all the seams and joins are further sealed using a sealant (Paul has found that [CT1 sealant](#) works best for this).
- Duct tape may be wrapped around the film to help stiffen the mould.
- And don't forget to stand the mould in a bucket when filling, just in case you didn't seal it completely!



To improve the quality of the castings you can use a vacuum pot or a pressure pot. A vacuum pot draws air out of the resin to remove bubbles, whilst a pressure pot squeezes the air into very tiny bubbles that are practically invisible.

Paul managed without either for a long time, so unless you intend to do a lot of resin work neither is probably worth the expense.



Minor holes and blemishes can be patched up with UV resin (available from a variety of sources including [Moulded](#)). This type of resin does not use a hardener and is cured by using a [UV lamp](#).



[Tuck Tape](#) is a polypropylene tape that can be used to stop resin sticking to plywood boards and moulds.



Gallery

Here is a collection of items made by club members in recent months.



Two bowls made by Steve A
Above – mallee burr offcuts in resin
Right – resin with acorn cups and tagua nuts



Nested spiral stand by Phil O

Please send photographs of anything you have made to newsletter@madturners.co.uk, or better still bring them along on a club night to put on the inspiration table for all to admire.

Timber of the Month – Monkey Puzzle



Monkey puzzle (*araucaria araucana*), is an evergreen tree native to central and southern Chile and western Argentina. It is also known as monkey tail tree, piñonero, pewen or Argentinian pine. Because of the prevalence of similar species in ancient prehistory, it is sometimes called an animate fossil.

The tree grows to a height of 30–40 m (98–131 ft) with a trunk diameter of 1–1.5 m (3.3–4.9 ft). Mature trees can be over 1000 years old.

Monkey puzzle is a popular garden tree, planted for the unusual effect of its thick, "reptilian" branches with very symmetrical appearance. It prefers temperate climates with abundant rainfall, tolerating temperatures down to about –20 °C. It is far and away the hardiest member of its genus. Despite growing all over the world, its conservation status was changed to Endangered by the IUCN in 2013 due to the dwindling native population caused by logging, forest fires, and grazing.

Many young specimens and seeds were brought or sent back to the UK by Cornish miners in the nineteenth century, during the Cornish diaspora, and as a result Cornwall is reckoned to have a high genetic diversity of the species.

The origin of the popular English language name "monkey puzzle" lies in its early cultivation in Britain in about 1850, when the species was still very rare in gardens and not widely known. Sir William Molesworth, the owner of a young specimen at Pencarrow garden in Cornwall, was showing it to a group of friends, when one of them – the noted barrister Charles Austin – remarked, "It would puzzle a monkey to climb that". As the species had no existing popular name, first "monkey puzzler", then "monkey puzzle" stuck.

Once valued because of its long, straight trunk, its current rarity and vulnerable status mean native grown timber is now rarely used. It is a softwood known for having a generally straight grain with a fine to medium uniform texture. To the woodturner it is generally used in sections where the branches radiate out leaving a series of attractive knots.

Monkey puzzle seeds are edible (similar to large pine nuts) and are harvested by indigenous peoples in Argentina and Chile. In addition to the normal wood, knots from long-dead trees are collected from the forest floors in Brazil. Called clavos de pino, or pine nails, these small, conical wood chunks are a deep reddish orange colour and are very dense. They are burned as firewood, or sometimes used for small ornamental projects or turnings.

Monkey puzzle is the national tree of Chile and sacred to some indigenous Mapuche people. It is said that speaking while passing one will bring bad luck or cause you to grow a monkey's tail.

There is an old Fenland belief that planting a monkey puzzle on the edge of a graveyard would prevent the Devil from entering during a burial. This link with the Devil extends country-wide; many even believing that the Devil lives in the monkey puzzle tree, although it is possible that this story was invented by concerned parents trying to stop their children climbing the spiky branches!

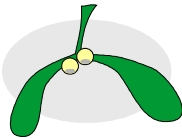


As It's Christmas ...

Some more Christmas crackers jokes to annoy friends and family!

Q. What kind of wood do movie stars turn?

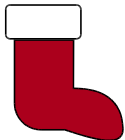
A. Holly-wood!



Q. What weighs more, a pound of maple or a pound of ebony?

A. *They both weigh the same!*

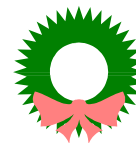
I'm part of a tree that is not in the sky or under the ground. I can move throughout the day and change shape. What am I?
Its shadow.



I was walking in the woods with a friend discussing trees when I came across a tree I couldn't identify. My friend recognised it straight away as being a dogwood..... he identified it by its bark.

Q. Why do trees hate tests?

A. *Because they get stumped by the questions!*



Don't Forget to Use Your Club Discounts

Just present your club membership card (it may be worth checking beforehand whether a discount will apply to your intended purchase)



10% off most items, except power tools.



10% off all timber and finishes

Finally...



Once again, a Merry Christmas to everyone and their families ...

... and I hope to see you all at the AGM!



If you have anything you would like to share through this newsletter, or have any ideas of what you would like to see included, please let me know by emailing me at <mailto:newsletter@madturners.co.uk>.

Thanks, Dave H